



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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“CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY”

Reminder to change your smoke alarm batteries this weekend

NASHVILLE, TN. – Tennessee State Fire Marshal Leslie A. Newman is reminding Tennesseans to change their smoke alarms' batteries this weekend when they set back their clocks late Saturday night for daylight saving time.

“Smoke alarms, even those that are hard-wired, should have their batteries replaced regularly and should be tested monthly to ensure they're providing the proper protection,” says Tennessee State Fire Marshal Leslie A. Newman. “Use the extra hour we gain this weekend to make sure your home and family are fire safe.”

Most home fires occur at night when people are sleeping. The smoke and toxic gases generated by a fire can cause people to sleep more deeply, narrowing the chances of surviving a fire. A working smoke alarm can double chances of survival by increasing the amount of time a person has to escape a fire in their home.

Nationally, more than 90 percent of all homes have smoke alarms, but it is estimated that one-third of them don't work because of old or missing batteries. It is critical to replace batteries regularly – even if alarms appear to be working fine. Twice a year is recommended. This reduces the chance of alarms chirping to indicate low batteries. All too often, a battery is removed and not replaced, putting a home's occupants at risk. There's no way to predict when a fire will occur, so even one night without an operational smoke alarm can be dangerous. Replacing batteries at the beginning and end of daylight saving time is both easy and responsible.

Here are some other helpful hints on the importance of smoke alarms:

- Smoke alarms should be installed in every room where an occupant sleeps, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of the home. Make sure everyone can hear the alarm and knows what it sounds like.
- Smoke alarms need to be cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Devise a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room, and be sure to teach it to any children who live in the home.
- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out of the home immediately and go to your pre-planned meeting place.

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Many local fire departments have supplies of donated smoke alarms, and departments will help install them in the homes of the elderly and disabled. For more information, visit www.tennessee.gov/commerce.

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